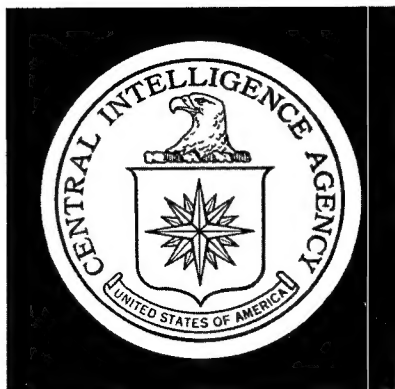


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43



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

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The Situation in Vietnam

State Department review completed

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14 November 1966

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Information as of 1600
14 November 1966

25

HIGHLIGHTS

Only light contact with the enemy continues to be reported in Operation ATTLEBORO--the largest allied operation of the war.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Only small-unit actions have been reported by Operation PAUL REVERE IV in the western highlands of Pleiku Province (Paras. 1-2). Light and scattered contact has been reported in Operation ATTLEBORO in central Tay Ninh Province (Para. 3). Viet Cong guerrillas were responsible for a large explosion which caused damage to buildings on the US base at Da Nang East. No US personnel were lost (Para. 4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

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25X1

According to the press, General Vinh Loc has apparently relinquished command of II Corps (Para. 4).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: The continuing contacts between Hanoi and Eastern European countries are discussed (Paras. 1-2). Comments by the Soviet ambassador in Hanoi on a cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam are reported (Paras. 3-4).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Two companies of the US 25th Infantry Division participating in operation PAUL REVERE IV engaged small enemy units in two separate encounters on 13 November, 23 and 34 miles southwest of Pleiku city in the central highlands of Pleiku Province. A total of eight Communist soldiers were killed; 10 Americans were wounded. The cumulative casualty figures since this operation began on 17 October now show 355 Communists killed; American losses are 51 killed and 221 wounded.

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3. In central Tay Ninh Province only light and scattered fighting has been reported in Operation ATTLEBORO, the spoiling action which has mushroomed into the largest allied operation of the war. A total of 19 battalions, including two South Vietnamese Ranger battalions, have been committed to this operation. Latest casualty figures show 84 Americans killed and 395 wounded as compared with Viet Cong losses of 933 killed. Viet Cong losses also include large quantities of food and munitions, with nearly 1,200 tons of rice seized since this operation began on 14 October.

Terrorist Attack on Da Nang

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14 November 1966

I-1

25X

on 14 November. The bunker, which also contained small arms and explosives, and an adjacent armory were destroyed, and another storage building extensively damaged. The nearby quarters of General Walt, the commanding general of the 3rd Marine Amphibious Force, was slightly damaged by the blast. There were no personnel injuries.

14 November 1966

I-2

25X1

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II Corps Commander Reportedly Removed

4. According to a Western press report of 12 November, II Corps commander General Vinh Loc has been in a Saigon hospital for several days, and will not return to his headquarters in Pleiku. Quoting "sources" in Saigon, the report stated that Loc was actually being removed from his command because of corruption and scandal rather than for health reasons. Whether Loc has in fact been removed as II Corps commander remains to be seen. It is doubtful that he would be removed from the present military power structure for long. Although there have at times been rumors of Loc's excessive independence as II Corps commander, Ky reportedly regards Loc highly; moreover, Loc was promoted to lieutenant general on 1 November. If he does relinquish the II Corps command, it is possible that he might assume command of IV Corps if Quang is removed in the near future.

14 November 1966

II-2

25X1

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

14 November 1966

IV-1

V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Hanoi is continuing to expand contacts with Eastern European Communists by sending politburo member and Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh to the current meeting of the Bulgarian party congress. Since early summer the stream of high-level European visitors to Hanoi and the exchange visits of North Vietnamese politburo members to Eastern Europe have increased.

2. The most significant North Vietnamese visit was the two-month tour of Le Thanh Nghi as head of an aid mission which is being hailed in Hanoi as extremely successful. The publicity surrounding the mission includes special editorials, a Council of Minister's meeting to hear Nghi's report, and formal letters of thanks from Premier Pham Van Dong. Throughout all this exchange, however, Hanoi is refusing to budge from its middle ground in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Hoang Van Hoan listened in silence to condemnations of Soviet revisionism at the recent Albanian party congress and Nguyen Duy Trinh will probably sit on his hands while Communist China is condemned in Sofia.

3. The Soviet ambassador in Hanoi, in response to a direct question [redacted] has provided the latest in a series of statements by bloc officials concerning the possible outcome of a cessation of US bombings of North Vietnam. According to the Soviet diplomat, a cessation at this time would "produce a relaxation of tension which would prepare the ground for negotiations." Elaborating on the negotiations theme, the ambassador stated that once the North Vietnamese were convinced that the Americans did not intend to maintain a military presence after a settlement they would, "while maintaining the principles of the four points, negotiate flexibly in detail." In addition, the ambassador stated that withdrawal was not a precondition for negotiations and that although the NFLSV must be represented, it need not be the sole representative of South Vietnam at a conference.

25X

14 November 1966

V-1

4. [redacted] he cannot be sure that the Soviet ambassador was speaking with the authorization of Hanoi. Actually, there is nothing new in the Soviet ambassador's statement. It did not commit Hanoi to any specific action and appears to have been in step with other vague assurances proffered by the Soviets and Eastern Europeans over the past year and a half that a cessation of the air strikes will result in better prospects for negotiations.

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14 November 1966

V-2

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